

~~SECRET~~

2 May 1958 ✓

MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR *

**SUBJECT: Probable French Reactions to Creation of an
Algerian government-in-exile**

1. The Tangier conference of 27-30 April has produced a communique recommending that an independent Algerian government be formed by the FLN, after consultation with the Moroccan and Tunisian governments. The form of this recommendation appears to have been devised largely by Tunisia, influenced by: (a) the fear that the FLN already was on the verge of setting up such a government in Cairo, and (b) the need to satisfy extremist political pressures for action against the French and in support of the Algerian rebels.

2. Noticeably missing from the Tangier communique, however, was any information as to when a government-in-exile actually would be created. The Moroccan and Tunisian governments are clearly committed to support the proposal. But both Mohamed V and Bourguiba, although ready to put further

* We have discussed this question with OCI. Although they have not seen this text, we believe it is generally in accord with OCI's views.

DOCUMENT NO. 10
NO CHANGE IN CLASS. ☐
☒ DECLASSIFIED
CLASS. CHANGED TO: TS S C
NEXT REVIEW DATE: _____
AUTH: _____
DATE: 21 APR 1980 REVIEWER: 018645

~~SECRET~~

STAT

~~SECRET~~

pressure on France, will not wish to close any doors to possible French-Algerian negotiations. It is likely that there will be a short interim period during which those leaders will be able to delay formation of an Algerian rebel government, while attempting to use this and other pressures to evoke more liberal French policies toward North Africa. On the other hand, should they be unable to obtain any such French response within the next month or two, increasingly powerful extremist elements within the governing Istiqlal and Neo-Destour parties will probably compel them to move for the creation of an Algerian government-in-exile.

3. So far, there has been relatively little reaction in France to this aspect of the Tangier conference outcome. Even Lacoste, who might be expected to spearhead any outraged French response, has not made any public reference to the matter. While the paucity of comment is partly due to the French Assembly being in recess, there are many indications that the French had anticipated some such move at Tangier and were prepared to minimise its importance at this time.

4. There nevertheless is likely to be a strongly adverse reaction in France at whatever time an Algerian rebel government

- 2 -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

is actually formed. Moroccan and Tunisian official recognition of that government would be virtually automatic, and France would almost certainly break off diplomatic relations with those countries. In these circumstances, the position of French military forces in Morocco and Tunisia would become even more difficult. However, unless subjected to severe harassment by the Tunisians and Moroccans -- which we do not consider a likely concurrent development -- those forces would probably not be so aroused by the political issue as to take independent action which might result in expansion of the Algerian war.

5. In France, the establishment of an Algerian government-in-exile would narrow the Assembly's field of maneuver in attempting to arrive at an Algerian settlement. It would undermine the position taken by many French politicians that a settlement can be reached with Algerian leaders not associated with the FLN. It would also strengthen the liberal argument that the pacification policy is bound not only to stiffen Algerian resistance but also to insure the ultimate loss of French

- 3 -

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

influence throughout the Maghreb. However, the impact on the French internal political situation would depend very much on its timing. For example, if serious efforts to establish contact with the FLN were being made by a French government of liberal persuasion, those efforts would be discredited and the rightist arguments vindicated, at least temporarily.

6. We are more concerned over another significant result of the Tangier conference; namely, Morocco's apparent agreement to match Tunisia's role in supplying the FLN across its frontiers. Although it may take some time before increased Moroccan help to the rebels will become evident, this development -- combined with growing political and territorial disputes between France and Morocco -- could lead to a "Sakiet incident" in eastern Morocco and possibly to a general North African conflict. We believe that there is still less than an even chance of such a crisis during the next two or three months, but that the odds may rise abruptly thereafter.

FOR THE BOARD OF NATIONAL ESTIMATES:

SHERMAN KENT
Assistant Director
National Estimates

~~SECRET~~